



A Bouquet of Thanks!

Come and visit us during National Volunteer Week

April 6-13, 2014

We will have a flower of appreciation for you .

Courts on the Move!

There have been a number of changes going on in the Hall of Justice. Read below to learn about the staff of our Probate Office and the merge from 2 offices to 1 for County Clerk's Circuit Court Records staff.



The Probate Office now has a staff of new faces and new positions. Amanda Flowers has been promoted to Probate Register and has been with the Court for 10 years. She is originally from Brighton Mi, and graduated from Central Michigan University. She has a large extended family who live too far away for her liking.



Melissa Cholger has been promoted to Deputy Probate Register and has worked with the Court for 9 years. Melissa and her husband, Gerry have been married for 30 years and they have two grown sons.

We also introduce Jody Barton and Linda Harker (formerly of Circuit Court Records) to the Probate office as Administrative Assistants.



The County Clerk's Circuit Court Records staff that was located in the historical courthouse, has moved in with the Family Court Records staff in the Hall of Justice. The combined office will now be taking in pleadings for ALL Circuit Court cases no matter the type of case. This office will have criminal felony, juvenile, adoption, civil and domestic cases being accepted in one convenient location! A new service in the Hall of Justice building will be processing of passport applications.

Pictured: Cymantha Kostecki, Christine Dlco, Karen Hampel, Marcia Caromoney, Lynne Stockwell. Not pictured: Catherine Cook



Happy Birthday

March

Harold Adler

Carol Valko

Wanda Anstine

Dick Reddy

Jim Warner

Judy Clark

Ellen Briggs

Christina Riddle

Darcy Schlitt

Bev Saur

Pam Petajan

April Putman

Colleen Macdonald

Geoff Reddy

Karianne Merritt

April

Vern Kinner

Parker Field

Maxine Rideout

Vic Rioux

Bonnie Lahde

Barb Wilkins

Dustin Tortorici

Reva Reed

Susan Kraus

Sharon Herron

Kathy Blunck

Jacquie Thomas

Marco Pazienza

Rand Leach

Mary Jo Zazueta

Lisa Niergarth

Ronda Franklin

Lisa Woodcox

We remember Joanne Baur and Mark Francis who passed away recently. Joanne was a retired teacher who focused her career and volunteer time as a tutor for elementary aged children.

Mark was a retired counselor and veteran who spent his time with us by working with delinquent youth. He also helped us recruit Law Enforcement students.

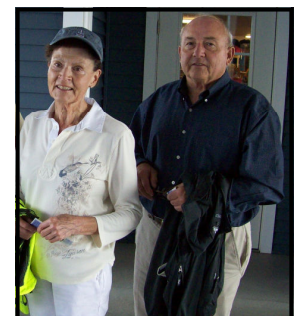
Both Joanne and Mark were wonderful role models and friends, who we were proud to work with.

We are also thinking of volunteers, Caron Alpers and Tate Stewart, who have both lost a parent in the past few months.



Thank you, to Sue Schmidt! Sue brought us a full bag of goodies for Judge Stanton's "Beanie Baby Room".

Also, many thanks to Jim and Val Doman for going above and beyond the call of duty to transport youth any time day or night and in all types of weather. We greatly appreciate all the help you gave during these winter months while many transporters traveled south for the winter.



SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, May 6th and

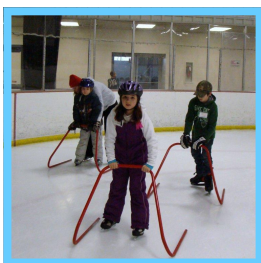
Thursday May 8th

(See page 4 for details)





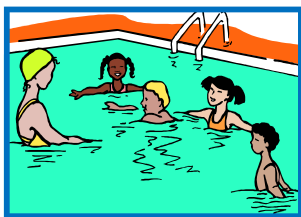
Learning Partners enjoyed ice skating on January 20th. Students and their families were invited to learn or improve their skating skills while their Volunteer Learning Partner cheered. Many thanks to Center Ice for hosting our activity! We were all able to warm-up and enjoy a pizza lunch following the fun. One family had this to say: “The



best part was everything. I really enjoyed spending time with my family, trying something new. Thanks for giving us this opportunity to skate and have fun!”

Thank you to volunteers, Nancy Fraser, Mary Wayne, Maxine Rideout. Also, thanks to skating helpers, Rachel Creamer, Cassidy Merten, and Allie Shumate.

Our next Learning Partner activity will be Swim and Water Safety lessons for all Learning Partner students and their elementary aged siblings. Tentative plans are for Friday afternoons beginning April 11th, at the Civic Center. More details will be mailed to Learning Partner volunteers and students.



We welcome new volunteers, Jess Heller and Thad Shumway. We have more students in need of Learning Partner support– spread the word! Next Learning Partner meeting is March 4th, 4:00 p.m., at our Volunteer Services office.

A Court Appointed Special Advocate training program will begin Monday, **March 3rd**. Once again this year, Leelanau County has been invited to train with us. All CASA volunteers are encouraged to join us for parts of the training they may have missed or for a refresh.



On **March 18th**, our regular monthly meeting, we will revisit the “basics” of our role as a CASA volunteer and spend time on current case studies.

Kirstin Keilitz, Family Court Referee, will join us **April 15th**. She will discuss, “Getting information from other courts.” Information gathering is an important part of our CASA role. Several of our current cases have parents involved with other courts.

At a recent CASA meeting, the FTM, Family Team Meeting was discussed. Thank you to **Suzanne Brainard, of Bethany Christian Services** for sharing this important information with our volunteers.

The following are a few of the times when an FTM must take place throughout an open CPS case:

- Within 30 calendar days before OR 14 calendar days after CPS case opening.
- When there is an updated service plan/case closing, FTM must take place 30 business days prior to these.
- Within 2 weeks of a request being made by the family.
- Within 7 business days from the date of the preliminary hearing, once the court becomes involved.
- Prior to any recommendation for change of goal.

SAVE THE DATE



The Michigan Guardianship Association and local experts will present the ABC's of being a guardian and a conservator.

The meetings will begin at **5:15 p.m.** at the Hall of Justice, lower level, Multi-Purpose room.

Tuesday, May 6th and Thursday, May 8th.

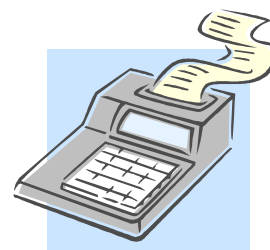
MGA was founded in 1990 and was established as an "initiator for the advancement of legislative reform, guardianship certification, education, and the promotion of best practices for the protection of vulnerable individuals."

They have visited us in the past, and reviewed the process and provided resourceful information on this important topic.

Accounting Assistance

Many thanks to volunteer, **Parker Field** and Deputy Probate Register, Melissa Cholger who met with volunteers interested in assisting conservators in our community who need help with filing annual accountings.

We welcome, **Tim Doyle, Carla Lamphere, Dick** and **Nancy Reddy,** and **Diana Zapalski** and thank them for their willingness to help us provide this special service to our court.



Literacy and the Family Court

Early into Judge Stanton's first year as Family Court Judge, she voiced great concerns about the ability of parents and children involved in the court, to read. She was concerned that parents may not understand the process and saw this as a barrier to their success.

For the past months, our Volunteer Services has been working with the Grand Traverse Area Literacy Council to develop a process in which parents involved in our Family Court, may have their reading skills accessed. The purpose is to assess the reading levels of parents so resources and accommodations can be identified and assistance provided to the family. The benefit we hope would be 1) agency workers would be able to better accommodate parents in understanding the court process and 2) tutoring would be available for the parents through the Grand Traverse Area Literacy Council, at no charge.

We hope to begin this program in March 2014. Many thanks to Dick Thompson and Mary DeGrazia, GTALC, and Janet Kronk, Family Court Administration office, for helping us put this process in place.





GRAND TRAVERSE AREA LITERACY COUNCIL



It's Spring! And a short while ago we were wondering if we'd ever see it again....

Final touches have been made to procedural documentation which supports the joint Court/Literacy effort to provide literacy training to parents seeking reinstatement of parental relationships with their children. This promises to be an extremely valuable dimension to the parenting process as we know non reading parents tend to produce non reading children.

Cherryland Middle School Class of 2018 (Elk Rapids Public Schools) will be holding a fund raiser for GTALC. The event is a Mexican-themed dinner to be held on March 7th at the school. Representatives of GTALC will be present, recognized and asked to make comments.

Staples of Traverse City has notified GTALC that it is the designated beneficiary of a national program to support local non profits who serve their communities. GTALC will receive a \$500 donation toward supporting our Mission: The Grand Traverse Area Literacy Council Enables Adults to Achieve their Literacy Goals.

One of our current volunteers and past board member, Linda Frank, represented GTALC at a recent Poverty Reduction Initiative meeting. Linda provided an overview of GTALC services which generated lots of follow up inquiries.

GTALC continues to recruit, assess and match adult non readers with trained tutors. However, the Polar Vortex driven winter weather slowed activity considerably. I am sure that with the warmth of spring, activity will pick up.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Thompson, President Grand Traverse Area Literacy Council



March 17th- An evening with George Packer

April 8th– An evening with Steve Luxenberg

April 24th– An evening with Anchee Min

**To purchase tickets or for more information, visit
www.cityoperahouse.org or call 231-941-8082**



**VOLUNTEERS IN
PREVENTION/PROBATION**

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE COURT

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT

MELANIE D. STANTON, PROBATE & FAMILY COURT JUDGE

280 Washington St., Suite B 150, Traverse City, MI 49684

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**Spring ahead! Don't forget to
change your clocks at 2:00 a.m.
Sunday, March 9th!**

Or Current Resident

***All meeting are held at the Volunteer Services office
unless otherwise mentioned.**

Learning Partners

1st Tuesday-4:00-5:00 pm



Tuesday, March 4th, 2014

Tuesday, April 8th, 2014 (note date change)

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)- See pg. 3

3rd Tuesday- 4:00-6:00 pm



Tuesday, March 18th, 2014

Tuesday, April 15th, 2014

Literacy Council

3rd Wednesday-6:00 pm
Traverse Area District Library



Wednesday, March 19th, 2014

Wednesday, April 16th, 2014



**April
National Child
Abuse Prevention
Month**

Earth Day

**Tuesday,
April 22,
2014**

